

TRANSPORTATION BUDGET PRIORITIES

STATEMENT

Transportation is critical to maintaining the independence of people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities do not drive or own a vehicle because of their disability and/or limited income. Access to transportation is consistently the top concern for people with disabilities in Wisconsin. When people with disabilities cannot access transportation or the transportation network does not get them where they need to go when they need to, they are unable to work, spend money at local businesses, attend worship, or visit family and friends.

BACKGROUND

Transportation is the number one concern identified by people with disabilities. People with disabilities are not able to get where they need to go on their schedule. Community employment, staying healthy, and independently taking care of personal business depends on reliable and routine access to transportation. If rides don't come or are late, it can cause other disruptions in an individual's life. Increased costs can result when more transportation must be scheduled, appointments are missed, or jobs are lost because unreliable transportation makes commuting impossible.

Barriers to transportation for people with disabilities include; limited transportation on weekends and evenings, transportation options or routes not going where people need to go, rides being cancelled or not arriving on time, and lack of accessible transportation. Other barriers to transportation include high fares or unaffordable rates, one-ride one purpose programs that do not allow people to use the same ride to accomplish multiple tasks, fragmented transportation systems that fail to connect to each other (between towns, across county lines etc.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Survival Coalition recommends **DHS reform the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) brokerage** to ensure pay for performance billing for all NEMT rides, establish additional criteria for the NEMT broker, and establish independent oversight and quality assurance of NEMT services.
- Survival Coalition recommends **DWD request additional \$1.8M appropriations each year of the biennium for the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP)** to expand the funding available to help low income people commute

to work.

- Survival Coalition recommends **DOT request an additional \$2.5M in state appropriations** for each year of the biennium to enhance existing federal funding **for rural and regional mobility management**.
- Survival Coalition recommends **DOT request a 10% increase each year** of the biennium for specialized and public transit as well as **18M in continuing appropriations** to restore previous cuts to transit funding.
- Survival Coalition recommends **DOT request creation of state-funded continuing appropriation lines for coordinating, operating, improving, and developing public transportation options**, available to counties and transit commissions that are pooling funding for the purpose of regional transportation across and throughout their service area.
- Survival Coalition recommends **DHS require inclusion of transportation as a component of employment outcomes for LTC participants** working in community integrated employment or receiving community integrated employment services. Transportation must be directly connected to employment goals in care plan development.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT SURVIVAL COALITION CO-CHAIRS:

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Visit the Survival web site at: www.survivalcoalitionwi.org

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Wisconsin Investing in People with Disabilities***